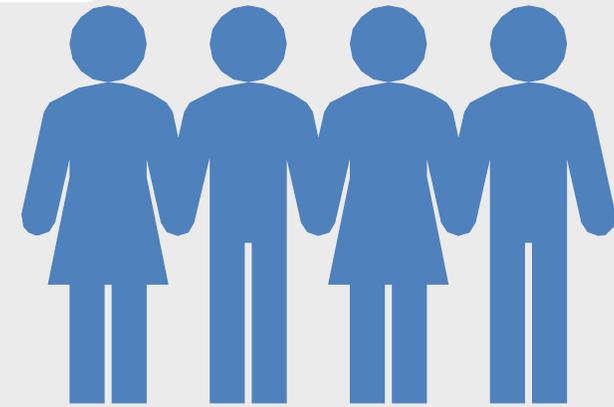


Further Education Learners into the Construction Workforce

June 2020

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1. Executive summary



Executive Summary (1)

Like all sectors, the UK construction industry needs a constant flow of new talent. This is underlined by an annual recruitment requirement to 2023 estimated at 33,700 people, some 2,100 higher than the previous year's forecast¹. At no point is the requirement more pressing than at the level of younger entrants.

“Conversion” rates between education and employment are not high for the construction sector. Research conducted for Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) in 2017² concluded that, of approximately 104,000 learners on construction courses in the 2015-2016 academic year, just 29,150 (28%) joined the construction workforce six months later.

This report sets out the findings from research, commissioned by CITB and conducted by Pye Tait Consulting, to explore construction learners' participation and progression (those aged 16-18) from Further Education (FE) Level 1 and Level 2 courses and the variety of influencing factors that shape the pathways they take. This was undertaken in multiple stages, initially through desk research and 11 depth interviews with stakeholders and, subsequently through 8 FE learner focus groups, 20 depth interviews with FE providers and 20 depth interviews with construction employers. Primary research was undertaken between 10th February and 17th June 2020.

Executive Summary (2)

As a result of developments since the commencement of the research, there has been a change in the research objectives to include an additional focus of the impact of coronavirus on all categories of fieldwork participants (learners, providers and employers).

The key findings, detailed below, are not intended to be representative of all young people, providers or colleges due to the small sample size:

- There is a lack of specific learner destinations data collected by colleges,
- Career guidance provision for young people at both school and college is inconsistent,
- Industry recruitment practices are limiting workforce diversity, impacting future industry skills levels and are a significant barrier to young FE learners,
- A predicted decline in the number of apprenticeship starts in September 2020 will likely lead to over-subscription to full time FE courses as a direct impact of coronavirus,

Executive Summary (3)

- Employer, provider and learner perceptions of the quality and purpose of L1 and L2 FE courses vary,
- There is a call for greater flexibility in the delivery of full-time FE courses in respect of both methods and course length,
- Young people, providers and, ultimately, industry, would benefit from an increase in the use of immersive learning,
- Whilst family background is most commonly identified as the strongest indicator of an 'industry stayer' this is felt to be misleading and, rather, provides an indication of industry recruitment practices.

Executive Summary (4)

- Young people on construction-related FE courses can be categorised into five groups.

These groupings will enable improved targeted initiatives/programmes which will overcome specific barriers identified for each of the groups and, ultimately, encourage more young people into the industry:

Ambivalent Learners

Focused Learners

Engaged Learners

SEND Learners

Disappointed Learners

- Targeted initiatives/programmes will likely take many forms.

Executive Summary (5)

As a result of our findings, our recommendations focus around aims for providers and employers; and those aimed more specifically at either providers, employers or CITB independently.

Recommendations - Employers and providers:

- Recognise the benefits of provider-employer links through strategic partnerships,
- Work together to find a solution to issues around accessing site experience for young people – consider the development of virtual solutions,
- Find opportunities to showcase diversity, communicate opportunities and earning potential through programmes and events such as CITB ambassadors, careers events and skills competitions.

Executive Summary (6)

Recommendations - Providers:

- Collect more specific destinations data, to help all parties better understand the value of FE courses
- Create greater flexibility in provision to reflect learner ability diversity
- Innovate career guidance, thereby moving away from the traditional (and inaccurate) view of the construction industry
- Embrace virtual teaching methods to aid both differentiation and engagement
- Develop immersive learning practices and resources to provide a viable alternative to site-based work experience

Recommendations - Employers:

- Educate employers on the benefits of a more diverse range of recruitment practices
- Put into place structured programmes to help develop their young people
- Educate on the purposes of L1 and L2 FE courses (and how these differ from apprenticeships)
- Engage with the FE candidate pool when recruiting – a ‘try before you buy scheme’ would enable a young learner to gain experience and enable the employer to find the right candidate for their organisation

Executive Summary (7)

Recommendations – CITB:

- Consider an initiative to encourage the sharing of good, effective practice by providers
- Improve tutor provision through increasing and encouraging a diverse set of assessors supported by way of a CPD programme
- Improve quality and access to career guidance resources which are effective in the engagement of young people
- Provide incentives for smaller firms to offer work experience/placement opportunities (financial/training related)
- Commission 'Destinations Research'* to gain up-to-date quantitative data.
- New Employee research: commission a smaller scale piece of research with new employees (having recently completed a Level 2 Apprenticeship or FE qualification) to explore their experiences, motivations and whether they considered to seek employment in other sectors.

Executive Summary (8)

The following recommendations are suggested as areas of support to benefit learners, providers and employers in relation to the impact of coronavirus:

- The development of online/virtual resources for use by young learners,
- Consideration of increased funding for FE providers to help with the impact of altered working practices,
- Provide guidance on the possible standardisation of apprentice re-entry process,
- Consider support for counselling and safeguarding teams in colleges,
- Moving forward, learner access to technology is likely to be key to teaching methods – provision must support this to ensure learners are not left behind,
- Industry must be supported/encouraged to continue to engage in work experience placements.

2. Introduction



Project Aim - Participation and progression from FE courses

‘To develop an overarching approach with providers and employers to stimulate more young people to overcome barriers or fears of entering the industry, and also, to help shape future interventions, (e.g. partnership activities) for learners wanting to pursue a construction career post their course.’

Remit: construction learners’ (aged 16-18) on FE courses, employers and providers in England, Scotland and Wales.

Aims and Objectives

As a result of developments since the commencement of research in January 2020, the impact of coronavirus on all categories of fieldwork participants (learners, providers and employers) was added to the research objectives.

The eight original specific objectives of this research are to:

1. Identify **data and trends** for young people (especially 16-18s) participating in and progressing from construction education into the construction workforce;
2. Identify baseline **financial data** relating to the costs to employers of providing training, the benefits to learners, and a general costing of funding from DfE to providers;
3. Explore perceptions of the **quality and value** of Level 2 classroom study relative to Level 2 apprenticeships from the perspectives of young people, employers and providers, including the premium placed on apprenticeships;

Aims and Objectives

4. Understand what **factors stop learners** progressing from education to construction employment, e.g. personal barriers, misperceptions, quality of training provision, employer recruitment practices, etc;
5. Determine whether, despite holding a Level 2 FE qualification or Level 2 construction apprenticeship, **young people consider or actively seek employment in other sectors**, for example those with perceived higher job security and more stable earnings;
6. Explore existing and **new possible actions**, interventions, pilot schemes and refinements to existing schemes that could help to increase progression from Level 2 construction apprenticeships and Level 2 classroom study into the construction workforce;

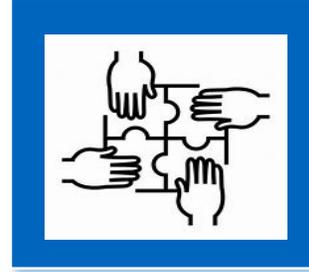
Aims and Objectives

7. Help to shape actions to **measure progression of learners** aged up to 18 on a Level 1 construction course relative to a Level 2 construction course, as well as the recruitment practices of employers, and;
8. Identify opportunities for CITB to **work with new groups of employers, providers and other stakeholders** to help build and shape interventions to boost progression/conversion.

Method



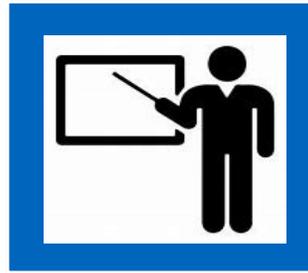
Desk Research



Stakeholder
Interviews



FE Learner Focus
Groups



Provider Depth
Interviews

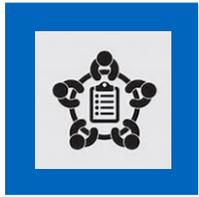


Employer Depth
Interviews

Method - fieldwork



11 Stakeholder telephone interviews
with key internal and external stakeholders, across the UK



8 FE Learner Focus Groups

- 58 young people aged 16-18
- Currently studying Level 1 and Level 2 construction related trade courses
- Held both face-to-face and virtually at colleges in England, Scotland and Wales



20 depth telephone interviews with providers

Held with tutors and curriculum leads at colleges in England, Scotland and Wales



20 depth telephone interviews with employers

Employer organisations are geographically spread and include SMEs and large employers

3. Review of existing evidence



A dark, irregular ink blot with the word "Funding" written in white in the center. The blot has a textured, splattered appearance with some lighter areas and small droplets around the edges. The background is white.

Funding

Funding landscape headlines



- £400m for 16 to 19 education for academic year 2020-2021
- National funding rate for high needs f/t 16/17-year-olds & students aged 18+ up by 4.7% to £4,188 per learner
- Programme cost weightings (PCW) factor increase
- Technical education is underfunded
- September 2020 - introduction of first construction-related T Level
- Providers wishing to deliver T Levels are to apply via the Capacity and Delivery Funding (CDF) route to deliver industry placement(s)
- 2020 apprenticeship funding changes for non-levy paying employers



Data and trends

Young Construction Learners - apprenticeship starts and achievements

The table below provides a breakdown of the apprenticeship starts and achievements by young people (16-18s) in Construction, Planning and Built Environment.

Apprenticeship Level	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Starts	Achievements	Starts	Achievements	Starts	Achievements	Starts	Achievements
Intermediate	9,110	5,110	9,170	4,780	7,940	4,280	5,710	1,310
Advanced	1,760	1,050	2,270	1,190	2,470	1,140	2,080	330
Higher	90	20	390	10	630	20	600	20
Totals	10,970	6,180	11,830	5,980	11,030	5,450	8,390	1,670

Source: DfE, Apprenticeship Starts and Achievements, 2016-17 – 2019-20

Young Construction Learners - FE construction related courses

The table below provides an estimate - FE courses in Construction, Planning and Built Environment (enrolments).

Level	Year					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Total enrolled aims	Young learners	Total enrolled aims	Young learners	Total enrolled aims	Young learners
Entry Level	4,930	1,791	4,530	1,645	3,790	1,377
Level 1	57,110	20,742	59,210	21,505	56,940	20,681
Level 2	37,540	13,635	37,510	13,624	34,670	12,592
Level 3	14,020	5,092	13,160	4,780	13,910	5,052
Level 4	420	153	250	91	250	91
Level 5		0	40	15	30	11
Not Applicable/ Not Known	340	123	330	120	120	44
Grand Total	114,360	41,536	115,030	41,779	109,710	39,847

Source: DfE National Aims Report/CITB

4. New Evidence





Perceptions of full-time
FE courses and
apprenticeships

Learner perceptions of full-time FE courses and apprenticeships



- Generally positive about their courses
- Learner short term outlook
- College prepares learners well
- Apprenticeships viewed as the 'best route' to get into a trade
- Value practical aspects (influenced by employer demands)
- College courses viewed as a 'safe environment to learn and develop skills'
- The responsibility for the organisation of placements is inconsistent

Learner perceptions of full-time FE courses and apprenticeships



I'm in a better position now to get a job in construction than I was at the start of the course

I think the learning we do in college gives us an overview of the job and 'the formal/proper way' of doing it rather than what is actually done onsite

The tutors are a big thing - the one who does the practical teaching is rubbish but most of us have had work experience placements which were good and gave us a better idea of what the job is actually like

Facilities and teaching are good but I'm worried about finding a placement and whether college will be able to help me find an apprenticeship

Employer perceptions of full-time FE courses and apprenticeships



- Insufficient practical experience
- False environment
- Courses lack challenge
- Tutors know their students
- Colleges do a lot to prepare young people for the work
- Apprenticeship route preferred
- Quality of FE courses vary
- Apprenticeships represent easy money for colleges

Employer perceptions of full-time FE courses and apprenticeships



The classroom is not as good as it is not the reality

What I say to all my apprentices is that they will learn more with me in a day than they will in a year in college. It is a day of graft and often they are just not used to it. In this way, I think they can often be misled by colleges. (sic)

In a small company you haven't got time to give apprentices the attention they need. With the apprenticeship, college provides really important support that we are not always able to provide.

In bricklaying, colleges just teach them to brick-lay, they don't teach what comes before and all the other necessary activities that surround bricklaying.

Overall perceptions of the quality and value of FE courses and apprenticeships



- The content of full-time L1 and L2 courses frequently viewed as poor by employers
- Providers believe employers lack awareness of the content of these courses
- Learners are, in general, positive about their experiences of full-time courses
- The quality of teaching on full-time L1 and L2 courses varies
- Full-time L2 courses are not comparable to L2 Apprenticeships

Learner experience of career guidance



- Inconsistent in both school and college
- Schools with no sixth form facility offer greater guidance
- Career guidance in schools is delivered to select groups
- College experience frequently centres around tutors
- Limited apprenticeship awareness prior to commencing in FE

Learner experience of career guidance

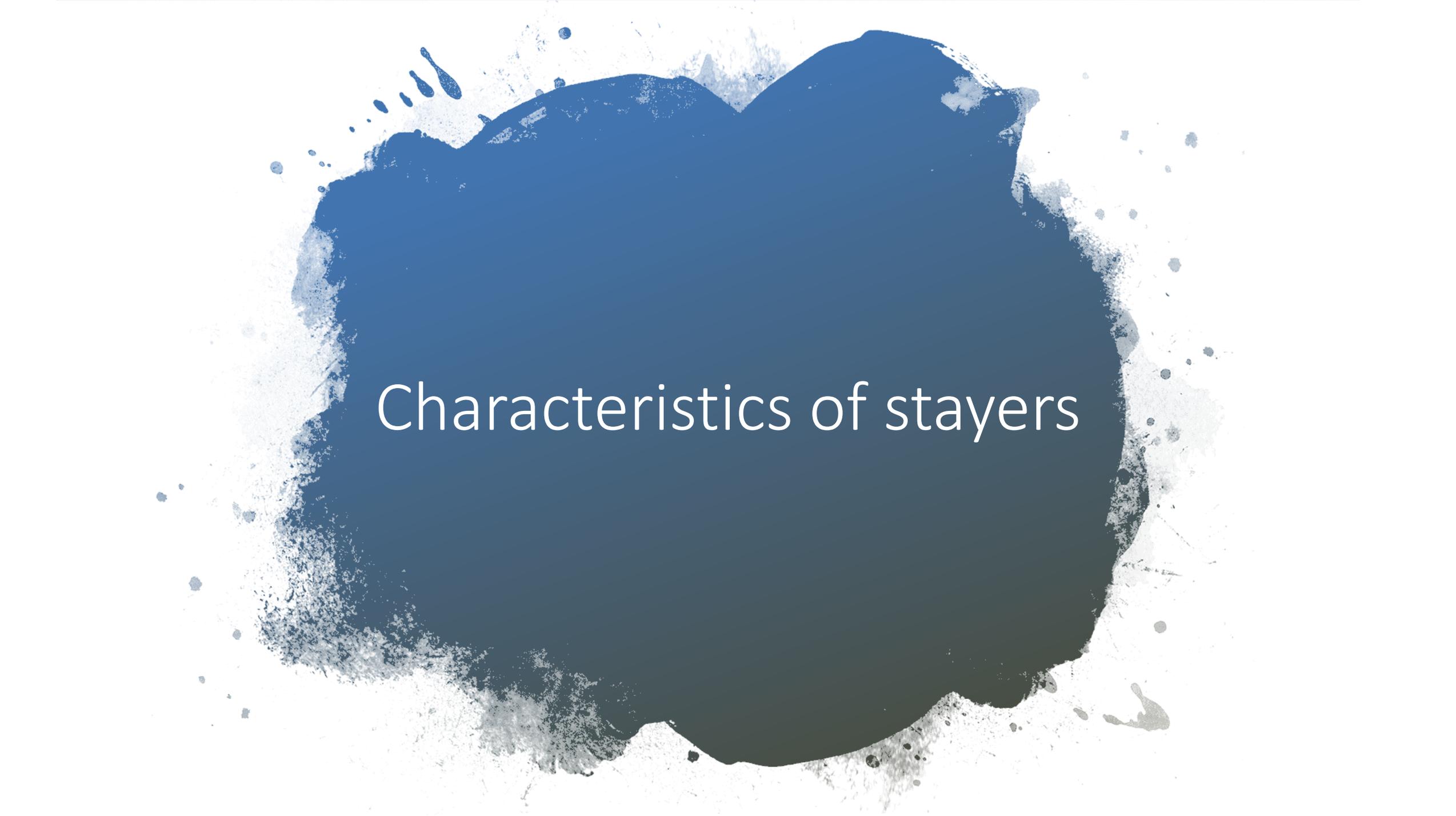


We have had a careers day at college where loads of local employers came in and talked to us, we also have talks from ex-students

Our school had no sixth form so they took us to look round local colleges and made sure we knew what we could do

My school was useless, I had to find everything out for myself, if it wasn't for my aunt [who is a college tutor] I would have been lost

Our college tutors know exactly how it works and have helped me with my CV and applications for apprenticeships



Characteristics of stayers

Characteristics of stayers – Employer views



- Family background
- Strong work ethic
- Age 20+
- Team workers
- Flexibility
- Motivated
- Passionate about their trade
- Background of employment

Characteristics of stayers – Employer views



The people we recruit have to be willing to do anything

Pathway not relevant – we don't value any particular pathway although perhaps if they have found their own apprenticeship it may indicate higher level of commitment/motivation

Stayers tend to be grafters (sic) - they work hard and have good communication skills (in terms of listening and making themselves be understood too)

Stayers are usually passionate about what they do

Characteristics of stayers – Provider views



- Natural talent
- Parent/carer attitude
- Parent/carer background
- Hard workers
- Awareness of the future earning potential and career options

Characteristics of stayers – Provider views



If their parents are in it, they'll probably go into it

It's not that family connections necessarily are an indicator of a stayer – it's the way the industry recruits therefore there are more of them

There is no typical 'stayer' in my view - some students have grown up quite poor and see this as an opportunity to better themselves, and other students from affluent backgrounds see their parents working in office and realise that gaining a trade you're more likely to work for yourself and have your destiny in your hands

Once they realise they can do something others can't and how much they can earn doing that, that's what makes them stay



Progression barriers

Progression barriers – Learner views



- Pay
- Lack of employer links
- Volume of apprenticeships available
- Recruitment practices of employers
- Requirement for GCSE English and Maths
- Need to travel/relocate
- Funds to buy essential tools and equipment
- Gender
- SEND

Progression barriers – Learner views



My SEND status will be a barrier for me, I need to find an employer who will be understanding that I might work differently to others

The need to travel to different jobs could be challenging especially to us when we are younger and can't drive (or afford it)

The need to get maths and English is really hard – only two of us on the course have got them so the rest of us are re-sitting. We don't want to and can't see the point but we know we have to so most just get on with it

Maybe the fact that I am female in a mainly male industry

Progression barriers – Employer views



- Work ethic
- Timekeeping (incl. early mornings & long hours)
- Weather on site
- Transport costs/willingness to travel
- Pay rates
- Mental health
- Experience of working onsite
- Age
- Perceptions of the industry
- Lack of diversity
- Number of industry opportunities
- Young people's expectations
- Employer expectations
- Lack of structured support
- College and Employer links

Progression Barriers – Employer views



Line managers' expectations of young people are often too high

We don't take them on now if they don't have their own transport

Colleges need to do more, but we, as employers, ultimately have more resources at our disposal to do more and it is of greater benefit to us

Employers need a very clear structure in place with support for all the staff involved in the development of young employees

Progression barriers – Provider views

- Learner motivation
- Expectations
- Money
- Travel
- The draw of other industries
- Lack of enthusiasm from tutors
- Requirement for English and maths
- Availability of apprenticeships/employment
- Recruitment practices of employers

Progression barriers – Provider views

It's about the opportunities for them when they get out there, without them they'll change direction and do something else

It's a shame a number of our learners are the main breadwinner in their households

I've worked in a few colleges where in my view tutors haven't done their jobs properly – our job is to enthuse and inspire - I'm very passionate about the industry and we have to make sure we pass this on

Only thing stopping them is the maths and English really

Industry recruitment practices



- Reliance on family ties for recruitment
- Practical experience prioritisation
- Preference for proactive candidates
- Qualifications less important than attitude
- The quality of a young recruit can taint employer views of the method used to recruit them
- Large employers more likely to advertise to attract applicants
- Greater consideration given to subjects studied at school than FE qualifications
- Inconsistent links between colleges and employers

Industry recruitment practices

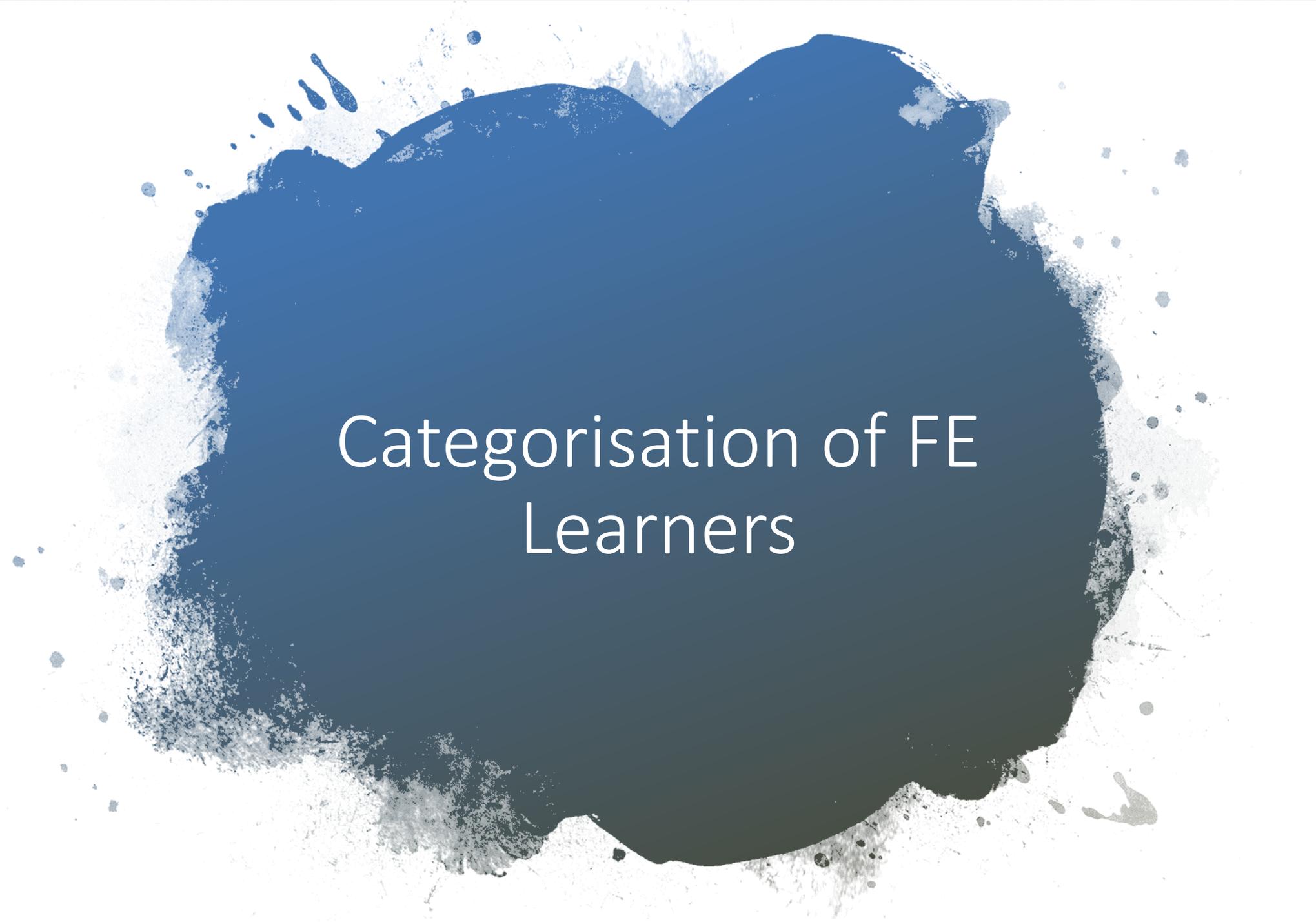


As a smaller company we don't have the infrastructure to support the training, we don't have the resources or time, they just end up as dog's bodies doing manual work

I do agree with qualifications but wouldn't dismiss someone if they didn't have them

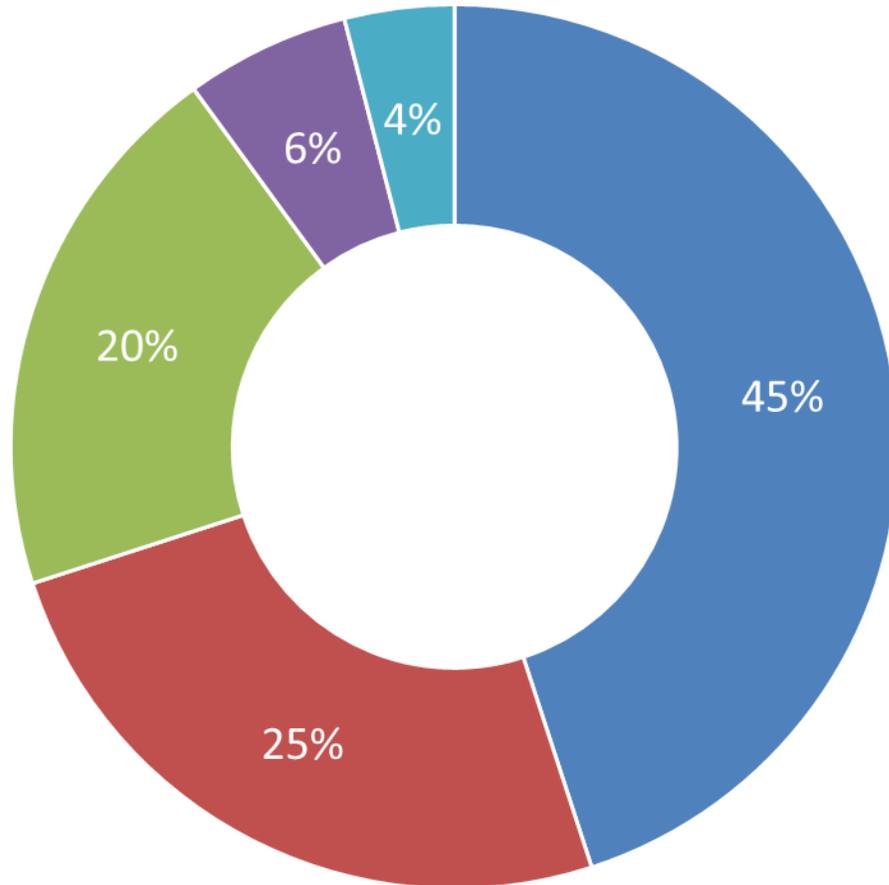
We look for employability skills and the practical application of trade skills

We look for family connections as they are more likely to know what they are letting themselves in for and will have the support and understanding of the industry at home when things get tough



Categorisation of FE Learners

Categorisation of FE learners



Ambivalent Learners
Those who lack direction, don't know what they want to do, have followed friends etc.

Focused Learners
Those with family background/connections to the construction industry

Engaged Learners
Those who have an interest in the subject they are studying, perhaps as a result of school studies or hobbies

SEND Learners
Those who have special educational needs and disability

Disappointed Learners
Those who want(ed) to take an alternative pathway but are currently unable (for a variety of reasons)

Please note: Young people who gave consideration to, or applied for an apprenticeship but did not secure one, are marbled throughout the 5 categories (Ambivalent/Focused/Engaged/SEND/Disappointed)

'Ambivalent' Learner Characteristics (45%)

Those who lack direction, don't know what they want to do, have followed friends, etc.

Frequently haven't achieved English and/or maths GCSE

Lack awareness of prospects/opportunities/earning potential

Lack of knowledge/awareness of what employment in the industry involves

Can lack motivation (not always)

Can become more engaged once taken onsite – experience real life (or can go other way – too hard)

Desire to be away from a school learning environment

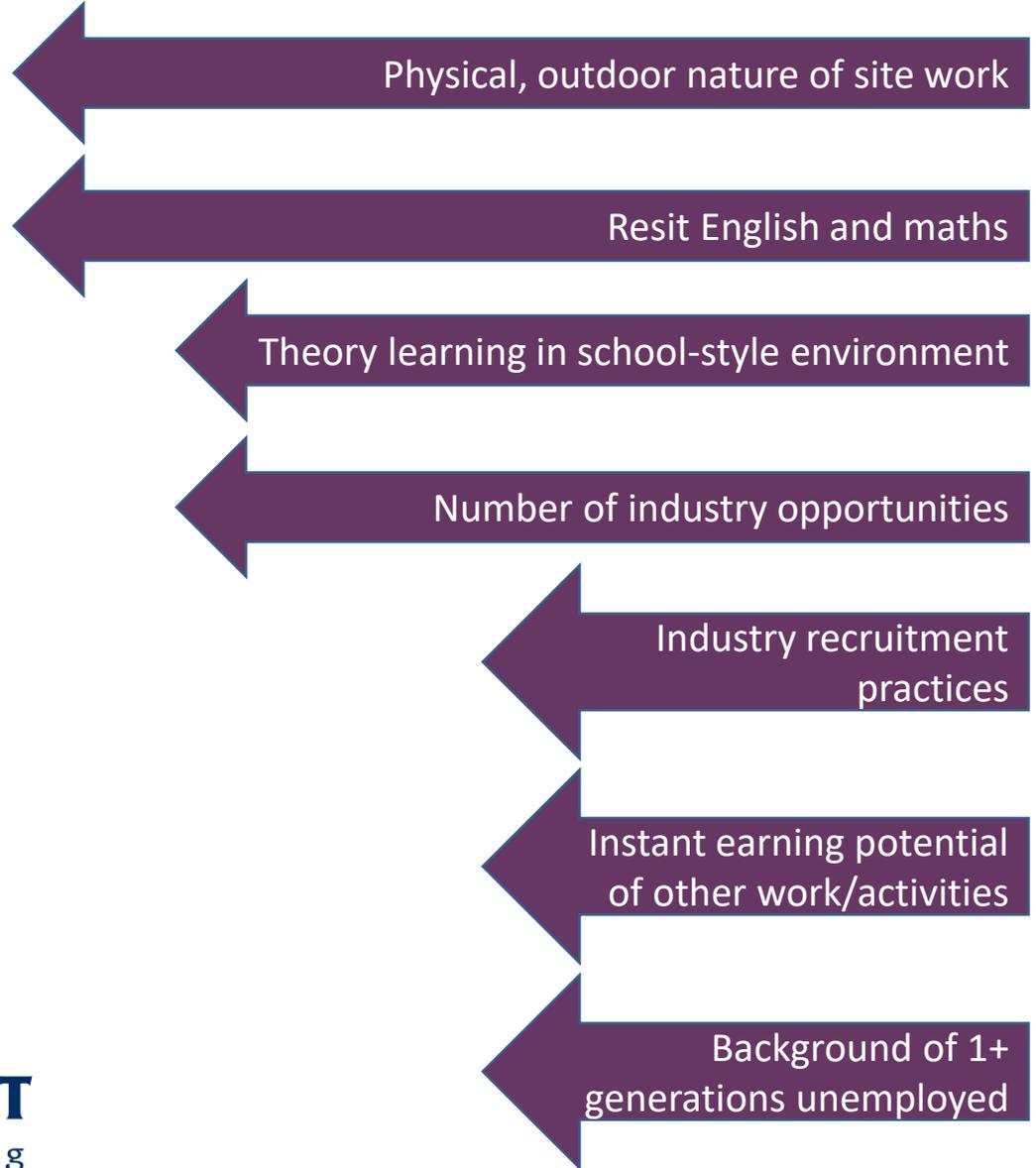
Value practical learning

Want a 'hands-on' job

Know they don't want to work in an office environment

'Ambivalent' Learner Motivational Factors (45%)

Demotivators:



Motivators:



'Focused' Learner Characteristics (25%)

Those with family background/connections to the construction industry

Greater knowledge/awareness of what employment in the industry involves

Awareness of prospects/opportunities

Have clear idea of what they want to do and the pathway they intend to take

Greater possibility of gaining an apprenticeship

Sometimes haven't achieved English and/or maths GCSE

Can be frustrated by slow pace of learning

Can be frustrated by lack of practical experience gained on FE courses

'Focused' Learner Motivational Factors (25%)

Demotivators:

- Lack of practical learning
- Slow pace of learning and progression
- Theory learning in school-style environment
- Lack of experience of working on site in a 'real' environment
- Resit English and maths

Motivators:

- Working outdoors
- Earning potential
- Opportunities for work/practical experience with their connections
- Plentiful work supply
- Opportunities for progression/self-employment
- Flexibility in course pace

'Engaged' Learner Characteristics (20%)

Those who have an interest in the subject they are studying, perhaps as a result of school studies or hobbies

Sometimes haven't achieved English and/or maths GCSE

Value practical learning and skills

Frequently want to be away from a school learning environment

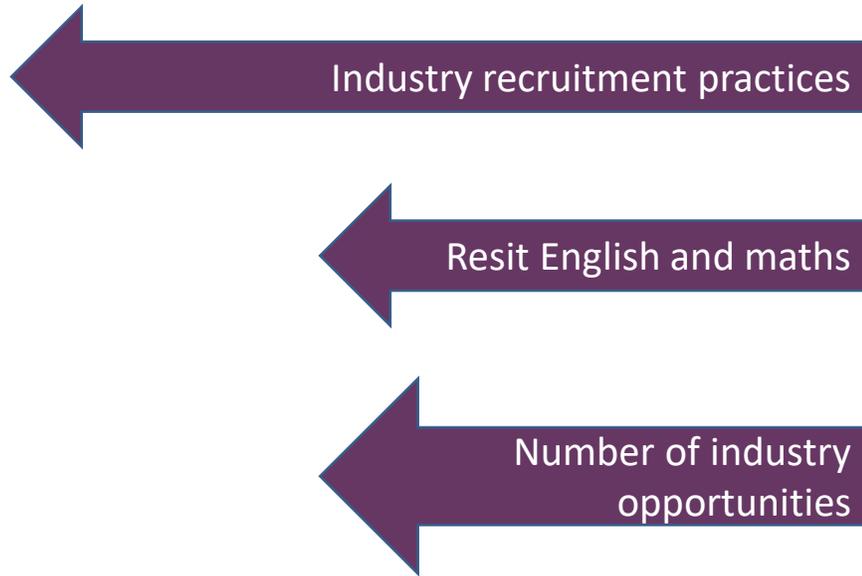
Lack of knowledge/awareness of what employment in the industry involves

Lack awareness of prospects/opportunities

No industry links

'Engaged' Learner Motivational Factors (20%)

Demotivators:



Motivators:



'SEND' Learner Characteristics (6%)

Those who have special educational needs

Lack the life and practical skills to comfortably enter employment

Benefit from structure

Frequently need more time/greater supervision to complete tasks

Frequently haven't achieved English and/or maths GCSE

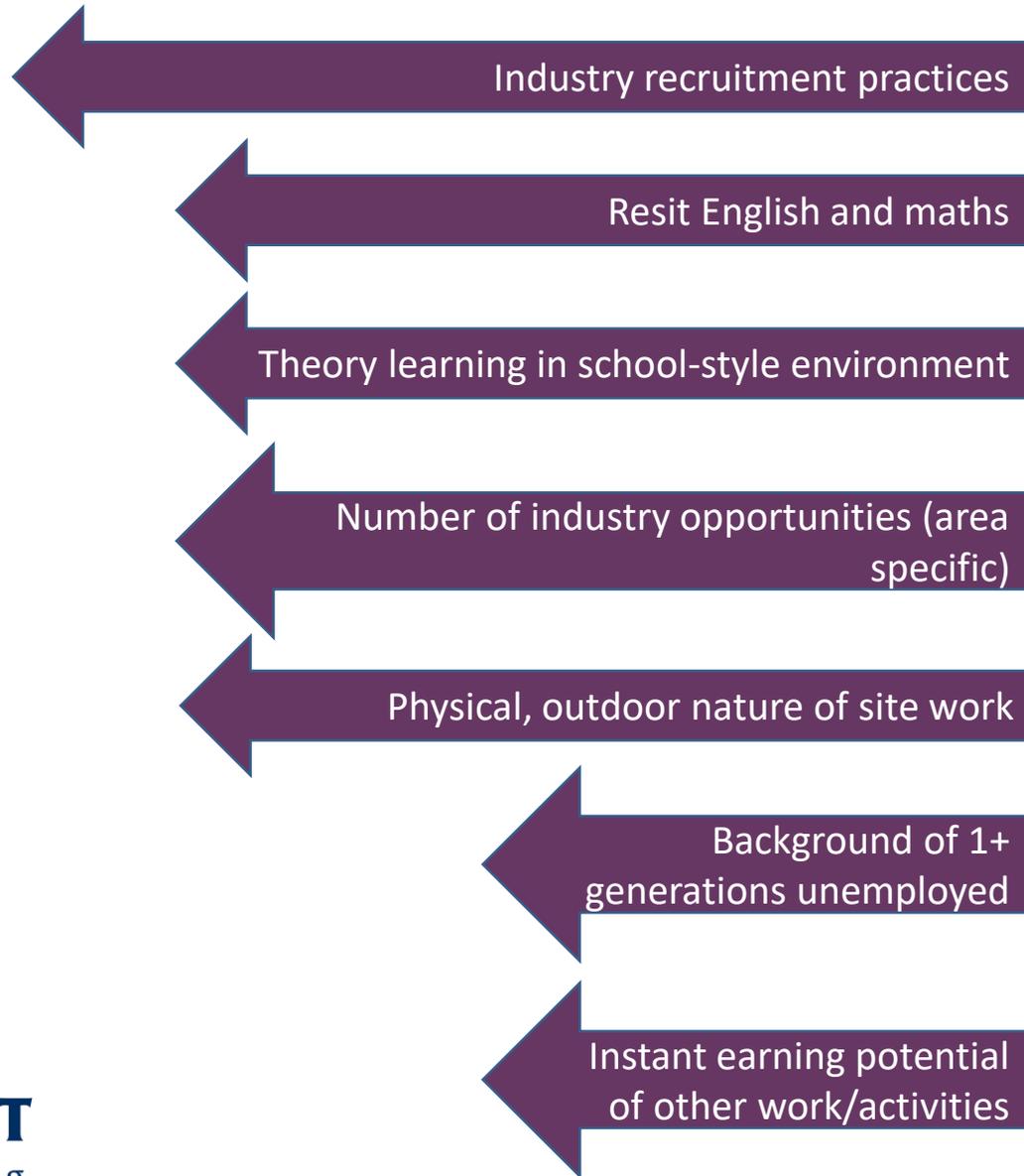
Lack of knowledge/awareness of what employment in the industry involves

Lack awareness of prospects/opportunities

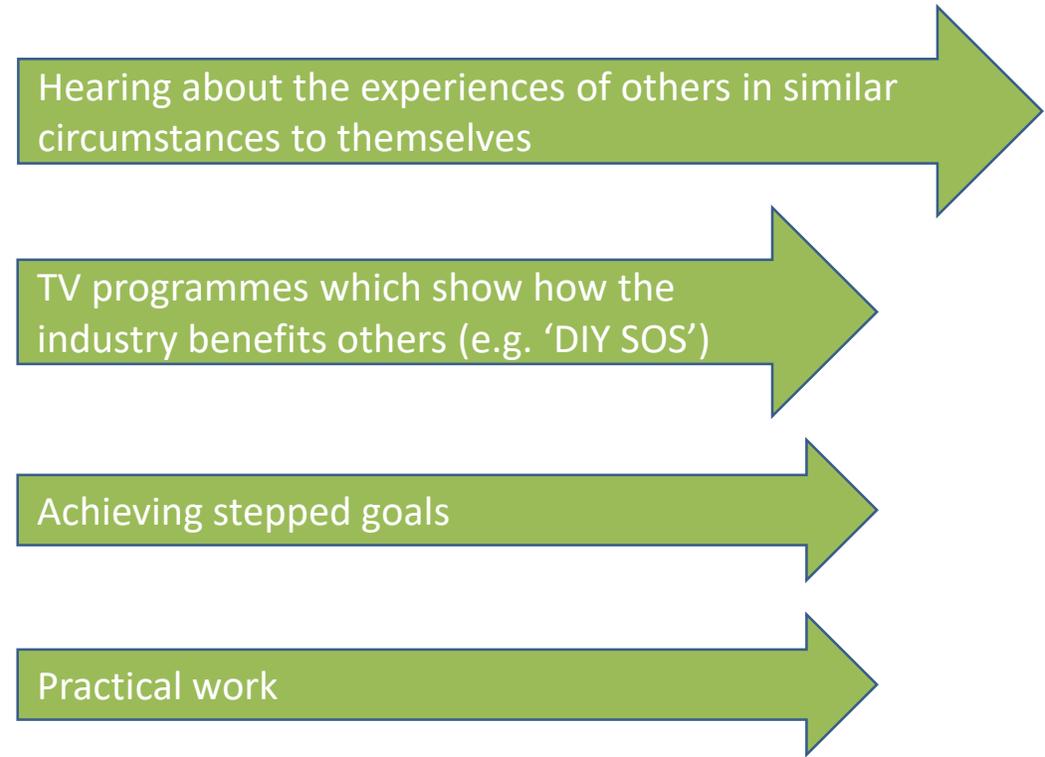
May have some connection to the trade through school experience, family connection

'SEND' Learner Motivational Factors (6%)

Demotivators:



Motivators:



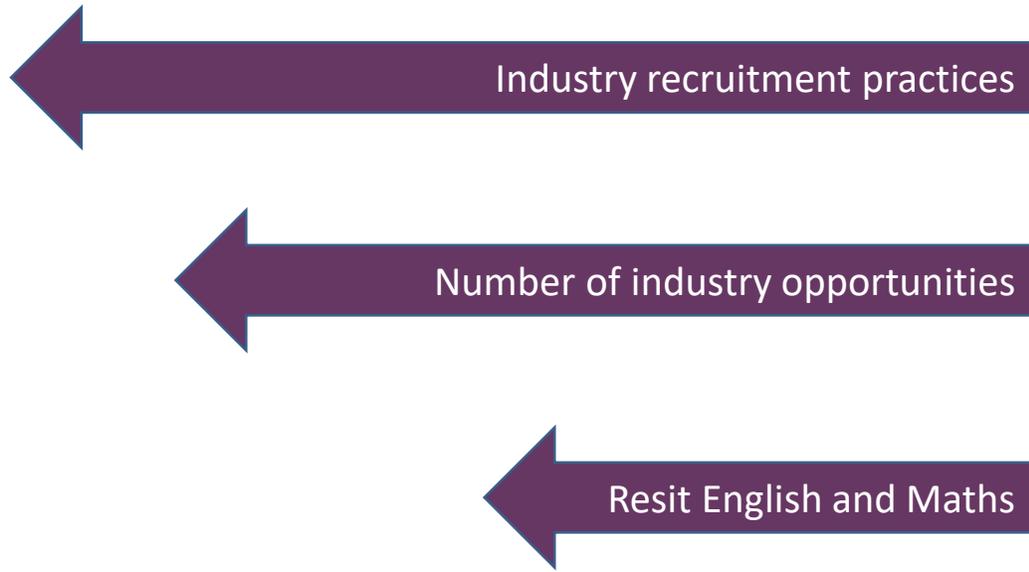
'Disappointed' Learner Characteristics (4%)

Those who want(ed) to take an alternative pathway but are currently unable (for a variety of reasons)



'Disappointed' Learner Motivational Factors (4%)

Demotivators:



Motivators:



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Existing and new
interventions/pilot
schemes

Existing and new interventions/pilot schemes

Accelerated Qualifications

National housebuilding company currently piloting accelerated NVQ L1, L2 and L3 in partnership with a private training provider

Multi-employer apprenticeships

FE college currently exploring offering students the opportunity to complete their apprenticeship with two employers

College Placement Teams

A number of colleges have a team dedicated to employer liaison with a view to arranging work placements and apprenticeships

Online theory teaching

College intending to teach theory aspect of their course using online methods, thereby maximising contact time for practical aspects of the course

'Try-before-you-buy'

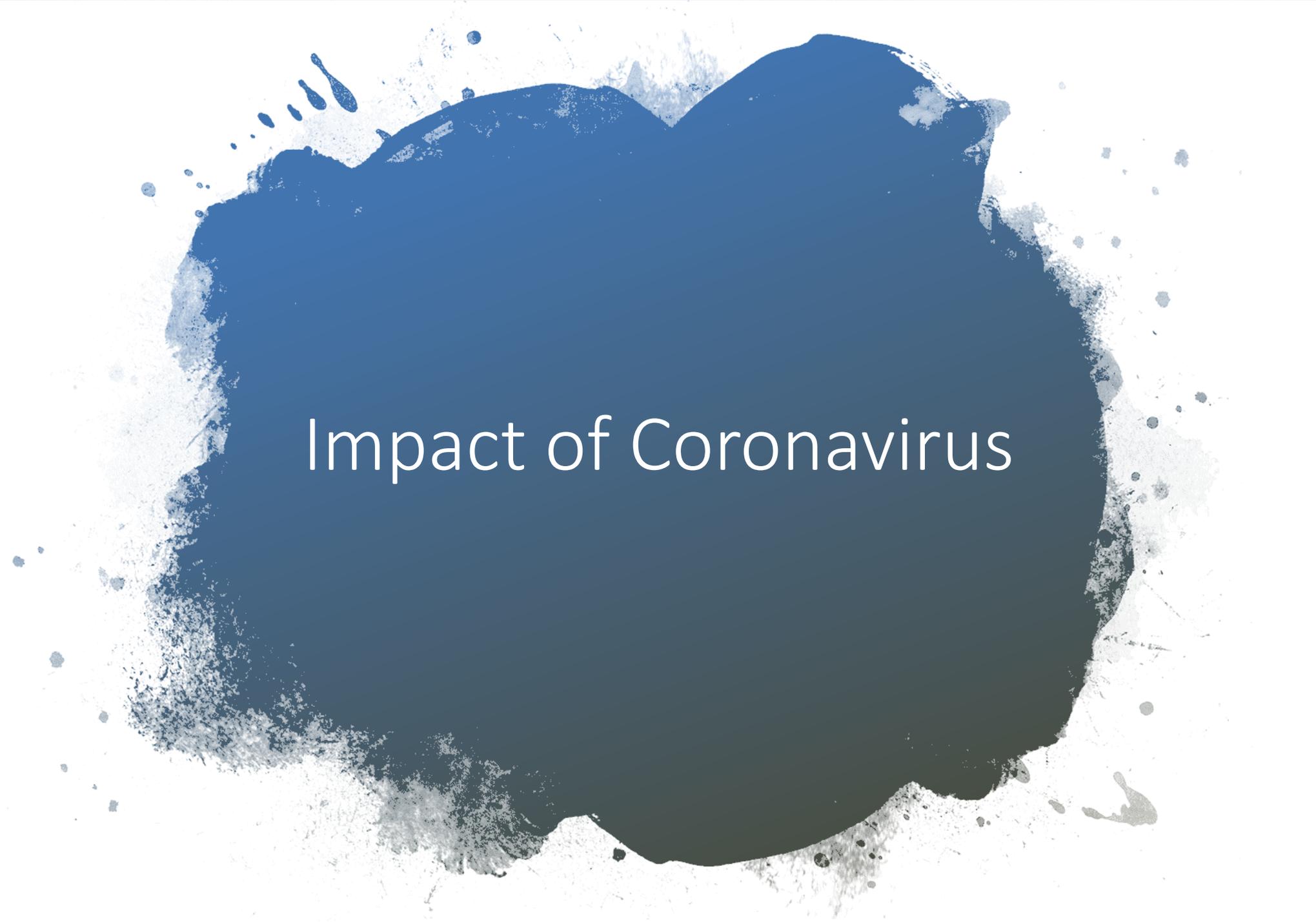
FE provider offers local employers 3 or 4 candidates for a structured trial when they are looking to recruit

Skills competitions

Some colleges spoke of the multiple benefits of involving their students in local, regional and national skills competitions

Provider-Employer strategic partnerships

One major contractor and an FE college enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship



Impact of Coronavirus

Learner views of the impact of Coronavirus



- Reduced number of apprenticeships (and jobs) available
- Likely increases in the length of time learners will stay on at college
- Unfairness in awarding decisions
- The number of students on courses might increase
- Impact on the availability of site experience

I was starting an apprenticeship in September but I know that has been delayed at least for now and it might even be cancelled completely

We're still waiting to hear how they will assess the practical aspect of the course – they sorted out what was happening with GCSEs and A levels much quicker – I don't see why they can't do the same thing

Provider views of the impact of Coronavirus



- Inability to progress with practical learning
- New teaching methods
- Impact of uncertainty with grading
- Continuous changes to guidance
- Funding
- Current apprentices furloughed
- Future apprenticeship starts will drop/be delayed
- September intake of full-time students likely to increase
- Mental health of students and staff
- Challenges around the reopening of colleges
- Challenges around attracting new staff

Provider views of the impact of Coronavirus



Our largest employers have already told us apprentices will be furloughed until October

The falling levels of apprenticeship recruitment also means our new intake is likely to rocket, however, we have to think about our capability to deliver

Unless we quickly get back up to scale, funding per head will need to be increased – I will need far more teaching hours to deliver courses to the same number of students and I don't know how long we could survive that financially

It's my view that we will NEVER hold theory lessons again face to face, we will be switching to online learning permanently which will then be reinforced in the workshops in the practical sessions – this will free up more time for practical aspects

Employer views of the impact of Coronavirus



- The industry is cautious
- The pandemic has brought the industry together
- Recruiting of apprentices delayed or on-hold for many
- Current apprentices who are furloughed will be last to return to work
- Possible loss of projects may restrict the experience which can be offered to current apprentices
- Possible future talent gap (if industry doesn't recruit young people)
- A reduction in recruitment of young people may impact ability to win work due to social criteria we must fulfil (large employer)

Employer views of the impact of Coronavirus



We don't plan on taking anyone in September as we are uncertain about the future - we are full up work wise this year, but next year is currently uncertain

It's giving us the opportunity to work better together, the industry is so fragmented - we need some coordinated industry-wide actions and the industry needs to learn to work collectively

I don't think there will be much long term impact, the work should always be there to go back to. Might take 6 months to catch up but we're not going to stop building houses tomorrow.

4. Recommendations



Targeted Interventions to boost progression/conversion

Ambivalent Learners

- Offer multi-trade courses to allow experience of a number of trades to engage
- Provide early experience of a variety of site environments

Disappointed Learners

- Optional course elements regarding self-employment
- Seek representation for the ambassador programme
- Consider development of post-apprenticeship career path plan

Engaged Learners

- Optional course elements regarding self-employment
- Provide flexibility for progression (fast-track/flexible pace courses)

Focused Learners

SEND Learners

- Provide flexibility for progression (flexible pace courses)
- Educate employers about the benefits of employing those with SEND
- Seek representation for the ambassador programme

Potential interventions to boost progression/conversion (1)

Provider-Employer:

- Build provider–employer links through strategic partnerships (especially needed in areas of deprivation and high unemployment)
- Advice on accessing site experience for young people
- Showcase diversity, communicate opportunities and earning potential

Providers:

- Specificity of destinations data
- Flexibility in provision delivery
- Career guidance innovation
- Using the virtual learning experience to help with the spikey profile of learners
- Move into ‘simulation’ of construction on courses, using innovative techniques

Potential interventions to boost progression/conversion (2)

Employers need advice on:

- A more diverse range of recruitment practices
- Developing in-house structured programmes to help with learners
- Understanding the purpose of L1 and L2 FE courses vs Apprenticeships
- 'Try-before-you-buy' pilot – work experience plus recruitment

CITB:

- Providers – sharing good practice
- Tutor provision – increase and encourage a diverse set of assessors – and a CPD programme
- Career guidance resources
- Incentives for smaller firms to provide work experience/placement opportunities
- Destinations research
- New Employee voice research

Support in relation to the impact of coronavirus

1. Development of online/virtual resources
2. Increased funding for FE providers
3. Standardise furloughed apprentice re-entry process
4. Support for counselling and safeguarding teams
5. Technology for all?
6. Industry support for work experience placements